(c) if so, what are the reasons for inaction on part of Government in this regard; and

(d) what steps Government would take to protect forests and environment in the areas being surveyed by the empowered committee of Supreme Court?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) of the Supreme Court, *prime facie*, is of view that violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been caused by the Obulapuram Mining Company. The Government of India has, therefore, directed the State Government of Andhra Pradesh that no mining should be permitted till the demarcation is completed in respect of 6 mines, namely, M/s Bellary Iron Ore (P) Ltd. (27.12 ha), M/s Y. Mahabaleshwarappa and sons (20.24), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (25.98 ha), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (39.50 ha), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (68.5 ha) and M/s Anathpur Mining Corporation (6.5 ha). The approvals granted in their favour under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been suspended on 30.11.2009 with immediate effect. Further the State Government has been requested to complete survey/demarcation by the Survey of India in a time bound manner. The mining including transportation of excavated Iron Ore has also been stopped till completion of survey/demarcation is done by the Survey of India. After completion of the demarcation of the area by the Survey of India, the protection of forest and environment in the form of afforestation, reforestation, creation of safety zone, phased reclamation of the mined over area in accordance with an approved reclamation plan, soil and water conservation measures in case of erosion prone areas and all possible measures to prevent pollution of rives, nallas, water bodies, etc. be taken up by the mine owners.

Mining operations of Obalapuram Mining Corporation

1892. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has given any environment and forest clearance for diverse mining operations of Obalapuram Mining Corporation in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, when these approvals and clearances were given;

(c) whether any Central team has been sent to inspect and study the devastation caused on forest lands at this specific mine;

(d) if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the steps proposed to stop the damage to environment and forest land due to illegal mining activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Environmental clearances under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and forestry clearances under the provisions of the

Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 have been accorded to three mining leases of Obulapuram Mining Company in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh. The details are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) to (e) The officials of the Regional Office (Southern Region), Bangalore had inspected the site on 23rd January, 2009 and it was reported that the mining lease areas were not found to be demarcated properly on the ground, there were no safety zones provided and planted by the mine owners. Hence, the inspecting officers could not ascertain whether the mining was restricted to the approved leased forest area or not. In view of the above mentioned site inspection report, the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) had also advised the Central Government that it would be appropriate that, in the present case, the demarcation be got done through the Survey of India and in the meanwhile, no mining be permitted to be undertaken. These reports were considered by the Forest Advisory Committee constituted under Section-3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and accordingly permission given for these 5 mines mentioned in the inspection report *viz.* M/s Bellary Iron Ore (P) Ltd. (27.12 ha), M/s Y. Mahabaleshwarappa and sons (20.24), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (25.98 ha), M/s Obulapuram Mining company (39.50 ha) and M/s Anathpur Mining Corporation (6.5 ha), under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 was kept in suspension till demarcation is completed by the Survey of India and proper boundaries and Safety Zones are provided to these mines on ground. Later on, a revised order was issued on the strength of the State Government's submission *vide* their letter dated 28th April, 2009 wherein suspension orders issued by the Ministry was kept in abeyance with immediate effect and the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests (Southern Region), Bangalore was requested to examine the report of the State Government within 30 days for taking a final view.

In view of the Supreme Court's order dated 01.05.2009 in the Civil Petition filed by one of the affected mine owners, the State Government was again requested to complete the survey within the six weeks through the Survey of India.

The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has repeatedly been requested to complete the survey work in time. However, the State Government conveyed that there is no need of carrying out of survey by the Survey of India in view of survey already done by the State Forest Department. The Survey of India has informed that due to lack of cooperation from the State Government, the survey work could not be completed. The Director, Andhra Pradesh Geo-Spatial Data Centre (APGDC), Survey of India, Hyderabad requested for security of staff and equipment during survey work. It was reiterated by them again on 23rd June 2009. Accordingly, the State Government was requested by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) *vide* letter dated 24.06.2009 to provide the security to the staff and equipment during survey work.

The area was again inspected by the officials of the Regional Office (Southern Region), Bangalore to ascertain the report submitted by the State Government dated 28th April, 2009

regarding completion of demarcation on the ground. The inspecting officials reported that there are certain variations in the position of the reference line *i.e.* village line (Obulapuram to H. Siddhapuram of Andhra Pradesh and Halahandi to Honahalli, Karnataka State). It was suggested that the revised sketch has to be issued for M/s Y. Mahabaleshwarappa and sons and Bellary Iron Ore (P) Ltd. and the bearing shown on the sketch of Obulapuram Mines lease has also to be revised to match the sketch provided.

The Survey of India has been again requested to survey the area demarcating the mining lease and safety zones on 30.11.2009. After completion of the demarcation of the area by the Survey of India, the protection of forest and environment in the form of afforestation, reforestation, creation of safety zone, phased reclamation of the mined over area in accordance with an approved reclamation plan, over burden management, soil and water conservation measures in case of erosion prone areas and all possible measures to prevent pollution of rives, nallas, water bodies, etc. be taken up by the mine owners.

Statement

Details showing Environmental Clearances and Forest Clearances for mining operations of Obalapuram Mining Company in Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh

Sl. No.	Name of Proposal	Area diverted (in) ha	Date of Environmental Clearance	Date of Forestry Clearance
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Diversion of forest land in Bellary RF of Kalyanadurg Range for mining of Ion Ore in favour of M/s Obulapuram Mining, Ananthapur district	39.5	30.04.2007	05.10.2006
2.	Renewal of Mining Lease over an area of 25.98 ha of forest land for the extraction of Iron Ore in S. No. 1/P in favour of M/s Obulapuram Mining (Pvt.) Ltd., D. Hirechal Mandal, Ananthapur district	25.98	06.02.2006 30.04.2007 10.12.2008	27.07.2007

1	2	3	4	5
3.	Mining of Iron Ore in Bellary Reserve Forest of Kal-yanadurg Range in Anantapur Division in favour of M/s Obulapuram Mining.	68.5	16.05.2007	08.01.2007

Use of Bt. seeds

†1893. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) names of the agri products for which Government is planning to introduce the use of Bt. seeds after the crisis created by Bt. seed of cotton;

(b) the name of the institute and country by which this Bt. seed is proposed to be provided;

(c) whether all tests on these Bt. seeds and the study of their toxic effects have been conducted;

(d) whether former Minister of Health and Family Welfare has written a letter to the Prime Minister in this regard; and

(e) whether Government would ban Bt. seeds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in its meeting held on 14.10.2009 has recommended to the Government that Bt brinjal is safe for environmental release, based on the scientific facts/data generated during 2002-2009 and findings of two Expert Committees. However, the Ministry has received strong views both in favour and against commercialization of Bt brinjal in India from the various stakeholders including the State Governments, farmers, civil societies, NGOs and scientists. The Ministry has invited Comments from all stakeholders on the report of the Expert Committee for holding national consultations before taking a final view on commercialization of Bt brinjal.

(b) If approved, Bt brinjal seeds would be provided by M/s Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Limited, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India; University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, India; and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

(c) Yes, Bt brinjal event EE-1 has been developed in compliance with the prevailing regulatory procedures and biosafety guidelines which conform to the international norms. The

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.